

2000 Parents Commission Needs Assessment

Method

Information in this needs assessment was collected in three areas: Demographics and Problem Statistics, Parent Services Utilization, and Parent Survey.

The Demographics and Problem Statistics section (Table 1) presents data on seven indicators, specific to Arizona and its counties, which have been shown to predict the onset and problematic use of drugs:

- Single mothers living in poverty
- School dropout rates
- Teen pregnancy rates
- Divorce rates
- Juvenile arrest percentages for drug and alcohol related offenses
- Percentages of parents who are single
- Child abuse report percentages

All information is reported by county so that geographic comparisons can be made. An index scoring system, created by the Arizona Department of Health Services for its report, *Differences in the Health Status Among Ethnic Groups, Arizona, 1997*, was used to summarize the seven indicators into a single health and well being score for each county. The score indicates the percentage a county is above or below the statewide average each score is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Score} = \left[\frac{\text{the value of a rate or ratio in a specified group} - 1.0}{\text{the average value of rate or ratio for the state}} \right] \times 100$$

Scores may have a positive or negative value. The above formula produces a score of 0.0 for a county with the same value as the statewide average. A negative score indicates better than average standing. The same system was used to create another score signifying the county's average rank on the seven indicators.

The numbers and percentages of children, ages 0-18, in Arizona and the number and percentages of parents with children under 18 living at home were also gathered.

Information in the Parenting Services Utilization section was collected from the 1999 Arizona Drug and Gang Prevention and Treatment Program Inventory and an analysis of current Parents Commission funding. The Program Inventory is an annual survey of drug and gang treatment and prevention programs funded by the

major state agencies. Data from programs that listed parenting services as a major service category were used for this report.

Findings from the Parents Survey, sponsored by the Parents Commission, are presented in the last section. This survey used a random digit dial sampling method to interview a representative sample of 1500 parents in Arizona.

The results of the analysis of data in each of three sections are presented in this report. Detailed tables with actual numbers, percentages, and rates and a copy of the Parent Survey Preliminary Report are attached.

Findings

Demographics and Problem Statistics

Three quarters of the children and parents in Arizona live in Maricopa and Pima counties (Figure 1).

Graham, Mohave, Gila, Pinal, Pima, and LaPaz counties have worse than average scores on seven indicators of family and child health and well being (Figure 2).

Pinal, Pima, Gila, and Mohave counties rank in the lower half of all counties on seven indicators of family and child health and well being (Figure 3).

The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse is a national assessment of drug prevalence in a representative sample of Americans. Samples specific to Arizona and California were collected and the Arizona findings are reported here. For Arizona youth, ages 12-17 (Table 2):

- One third have ever used an illicit drug including marijuana.
- One quarter have ever used marijuana
- Twenty-two percent have ever used an illicit drug other than marijuana.
- Almost half have ever had a drink of alcohol
- Forty three percent have ever smoked a cigarette.

Parent Services Utilization

Information about parent services provided in Arizona was taken from the 1999 Program Inventory. Some of the data may be unreliable and should be interpreted with caution. Cochise, Gila, LaPaz, Mohave, and Santa Cruz counties have programs serving over 100 percent of their parent population. This would suggest that all of the parents in those counties are being served, some by more than one program. Greenlee, Maricopa, Navaho, and Pinal counties have the lowest service utilization rates (Table 3).

Sixty three percent of Parents Commission grant funding is dedicated to Maricopa and Pima counties (Table 4). This includes funding for the discretionary grant programs and the juvenile drug court programs.

Parent Survey

Parents see themselves as largely responsible for preventing drug use with 90 percent of the parents surveyed saying they should be more responsible than other social agents. Aside from the family itself, parents see schools (42%) and police (21%) as having the most responsibility for substance abuse prevention. The federal (3.4%) and state government (2.8%) have the least responsibility.

The awareness of a drug problem and norms against drug use were high. The large majority of parents think that drugs (71%) and alcohol (68%) are a problem in their neighborhood, even more of a problem than guns and violence (45%). However, given that alcohol use is much more prevalent than drug use such perceptions may be misconceived. Parents accurately predicted their child's alcohol use but underestimated their child's marijuana and other illicit drug use.

Seventy-eight percent of parents strongly agreed that taking drugs is wrong and strongly disagreed that smoking marijuana is OK sometimes. In addition, upwards of eighty percent of parents thought that adults in their neighborhood and schools were strict when it came to drug use. Only sixty-six percent thought that police in their neighborhood were strict.

Most parents reported beliefs and parenting behaviors that would help protect their children from drug use:

- Over 90 percent of parents believe that a close and healthy relationship with their child can prevent drug use and over 80 percent report such a relationship.
- More than 80 percent of parents report that they monitor their child's time and activities and believe such activity will reduce the risks for substance abuse.
- Communication about drug use, its risks, and the importance of doing what is right is used by more than 85 percent of parents to help prevent drug use.

Approximately one third to one half of parents surveyed reported beliefs and behaviors related to discipline, such as hitting, spanking, and yelling, that have been shown to increase a child's risk for drug use.

Parents who had used alcohol, marijuana or other drugs were more likely to think their children had used these substances. Stressed and depressed parents reported beliefs and behaviors that would increase their child's risk for drug use.

Almost all parents have talked to their children about drug use. However, only 63 percent of youth in a national survey reported having had a serious discussion with their parents about the risk of drug use.

The large majority of parents feel they have enough information to talk to their child about drugs (62%) and alcohol (76%) but only one third think their child

would talk to them about drugs. Two thirds of parents think their child would talk to his or her peers about drugs.

Recommendations

1. **A significant portion of Parents Commission resources should continue to be dedicated to Maricopa and Pima counties.** Three quarters of the state's youth, ages 0-18, and of the state's parents live in these two counties. Even though rates of problem indicators are not as high as other counties, the sheer number of parents and children in the urban counties may account for most of the substance abuse and other problems discussed in this report.
2. **Resources dedicated to the non-urban areas of the state should be focussed on Graham, Mohave, Gila, and Pinal counties.** A larger proportion of the children and parents in these counties are affected by substance abuse and related problems than other parts of the state. They are also consistently ranked lower on these problem indicators than other counties.
3. **The Commission should focus its efforts on stressed and/or depressed parents, single parents both teenage and adult, single parents living in poverty, families with allegations or confirmed reports of child abuse and neglect, and families whose children are in contact with the juvenile justice system.** The Parent Survey also suggests that parents who have used substances in the past should be targeted with Commission programs as they are more likely to believe their child will use substances.
4. **The Parents Commission should avoid being seen as a government agency driving programs in communities.** Given parents' responses, institutions that parents trust such as schools, law enforcement, and the family itself, should be used to deliver the Parents Commission's programs and message.
5. **The Commission should work to improve parents' beliefs in their ability to affect their child's substance use.** Efforts could address several areas:
 - Increase parents' perception of their child's marijuana and other illicit drug use
 - Reinforce and increase beliefs that alcohol and tobacco may be larger and more important problems than marijuana or other illicit drug use. Alcohol and tobacco use has been shown to predict more severe drug use.
 - Improve the concurrence rate between what parents say they talk to their kids about and what kids hear.
 - Increase the number of parents who think their child would talk to them about drug use and decrease the number of parents who think their child would rather talk to one of the child's peers about drugs.
6. **For parents who are already exhibiting behaviors that may prevent their child from using drugs, Commission programs should reinforce such**

behaviors. For the ten to twenty percent of parents that do not exhibit such behaviors, Commission programs should attempt to change attitudes and impart skills that would help parents protect their children from drug use.

7. Should the Commission wish to address this controversial issue, Commission programs should change parent's beliefs and behaviors leading to the use of physical and verbal violence as a way to control behavior, including drug use behavior.

Figure 1: Population of Children

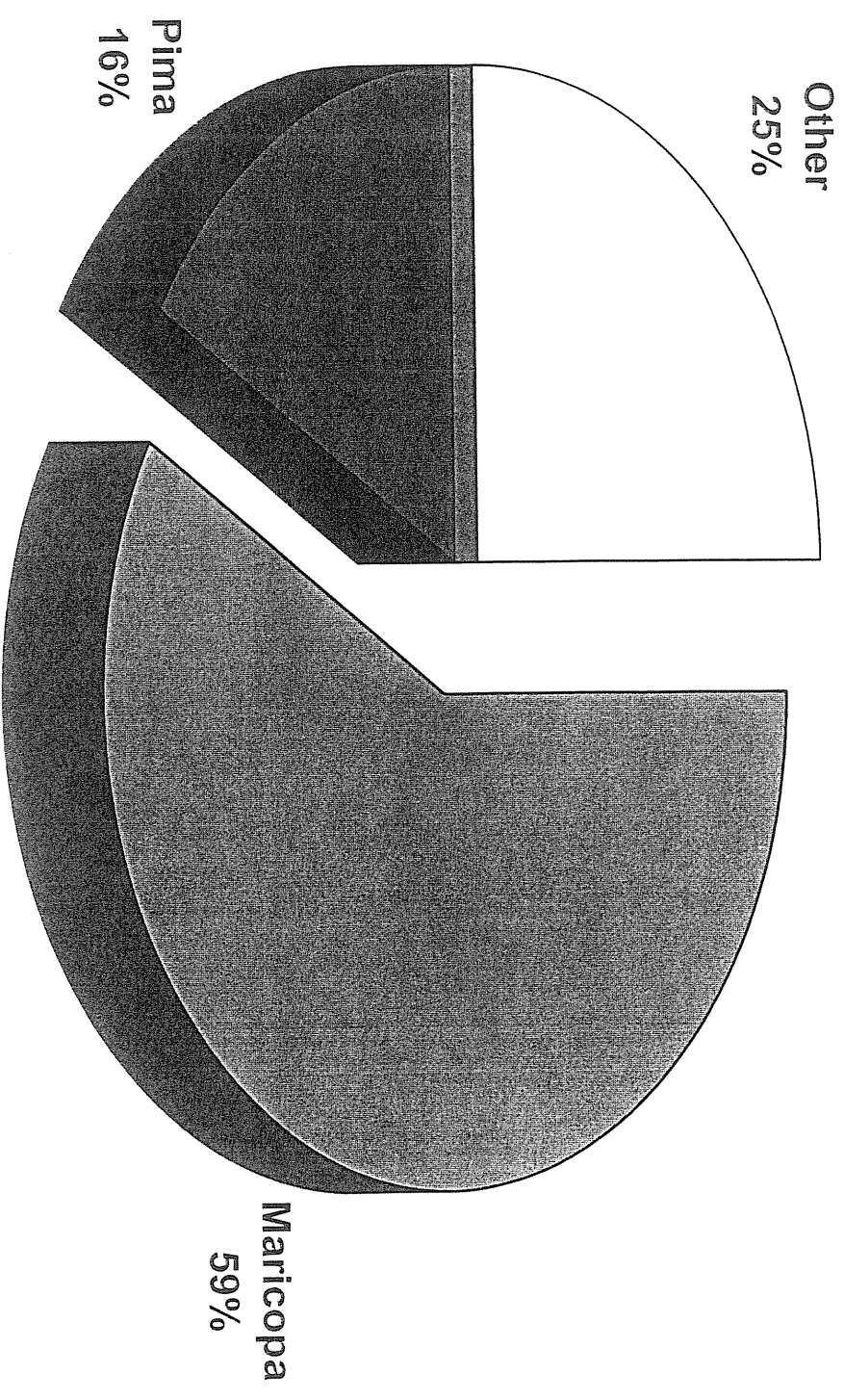


Figure 2: Average scores

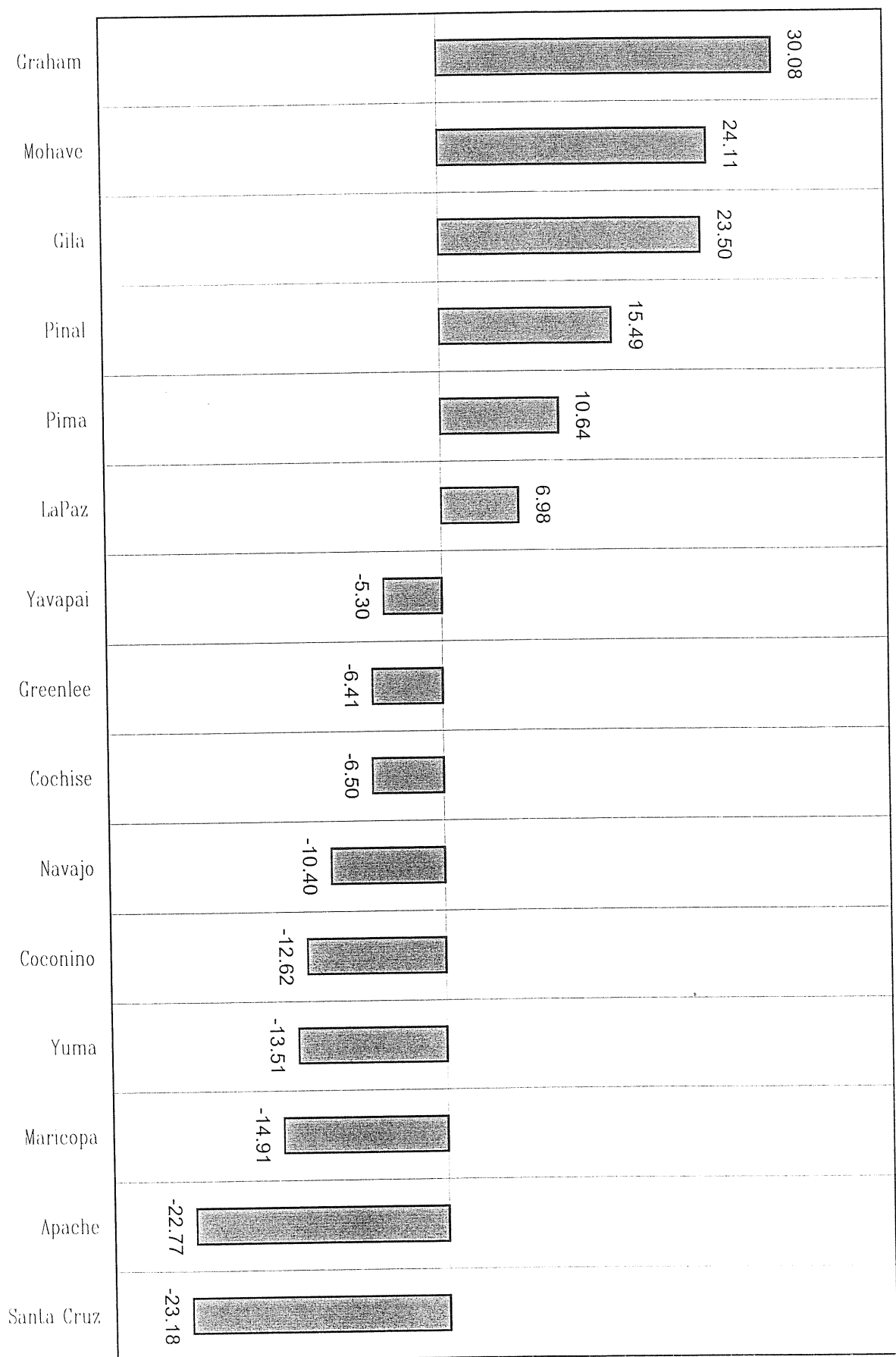


Figure 3: Average rank

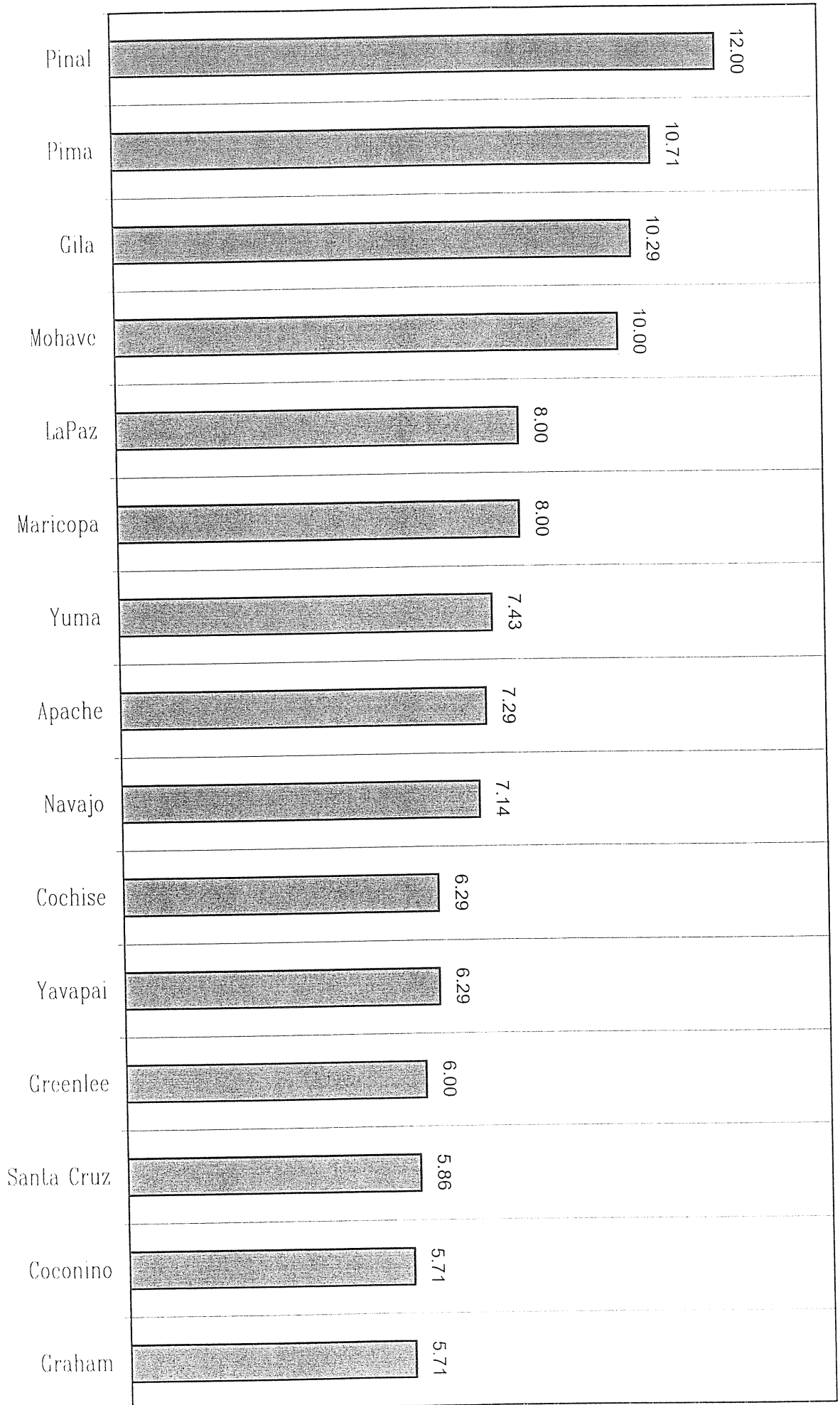


Table 1: Demographics and Problem Statistics

	Population of Children 0-18 (1996)	Parents with children under 18 living at home (1990)	Single Mothers Living in Poverty (1989)	School Dropout Rate (1998- 1999)	Pregnancy rates for 15-19 years old (per 1,000 females - 1998))	Dissolution Rates per 1,000 Population (1998)	Juveniles Arrests for Drug and Alcohol Offenses (1998)	Percent of Parents Who Are Single(1990)	Reports of Child Abuse (1996)
Apache	26,843 (2%)	14,649 (2%)	4.40%	10.70%	80.30	1.50	0.60%	16.76%	2.60%
Cochise	31,315 (3%)	22,336 (3%)	3.85%	8.10%	59.00	6.10	2.20%	12.63%	3.10%
Cocoino	32,878 (3%)	21,716 (3%)	3.12%	8.10%	44.50	4.10	3.30%	13.80%	2.60%
Gila	12,257 (1%)	8,085 (1%)	1.30%	12.70%	80.50	4.90	4.20%	12.70%	3.80%
Graham	9,940 (1%)	5,775 (1%)	1.16%	6.40%	55.70	4.10	9.10%	12.94%	3.10%
Greenlee	3,079 (0%)	2,219 (0%)	0.21%	2.50%	72.50	7.50	3.20%	9.60%	3.10%
LaPaz	4,213 (0%)	2,655 (0%)	0.73%	10.90%	66.40	3.50	2.20%	21.73%	3.60%
Maricopa	705,427 (59%)	467,652 (58%)	47.13%	8.20%	83.70	4.80	0.70%	13.48%	3.00%
Mohave	29,480 (2%)	9,711 (1%)	1.31%	9.10%	64.20	6.40	3.70%	20.89%	3.60%
Navajo	31,062 (3%)	19,053 (2%)	4.30%	10.40%	73.40	2.40	2.80%	13.59%	2.60%
Pima	194,999 (16%)	139,207 (17%)	20.21%	9.80%	73.60	4.90	3.10%	15.51%	3.70%
Pinal	40,484 (3%)	24,859 (3%)	5.45%	13.00%	86.80	5.40	1.90%	15.41%	3.80%
Santa Cruz	12,074 (1%)	7,607 (1%)	1.14%	8.40%	80.40	2.80	0.70%	13.50%	3.10%
Yavapai	29,242 (2%)	40,124 (5%)	2.28%	8.40%	61.30	7.40	3.20%	5.89%	2.60%
Yuma	38,880 (3%)	25,500 (3%)	3.41%	8.30%	81.40	5.30	0.50%	11.65%	3.60%
Averages	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.00%	70.91	4.74	2.76%	14.00%	3.19%

Table 2: Percentages Reporting Lifetime, Past Year, and Past Month Use of Illicit Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco in the Population Aged 12 to 17

	Lifetime		Past Year		Past Month	
	<u>Arizona</u>	<u>U.S.</u>	<u>Arizona</u>	<u>U.S.</u>	<u>Arizona</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Any Illicit Drug	31.1%	21.3%	23.9%	16.4%	14.4%	9.9%
Marijuana and Hashish	25.2%	17.0%	19.9%	14.1%	11.5%	8.3%
Any Illicit Drug Other than Marijuana	21.6%	12.0%	14.7%	7.5%	7.3%	4.0%
Alcohol	47.6%	37.3%	40.6%	31.8%	24.4%	19.1%
Cigarettes	43.7%	35.8%	27.5%	23.8%	20.9%	18.2%

Table 3 and 4: Parent Services Utilization

Table 3: 1999 Program Inventory Findings

	Parenting Programs	Parents Served by Parenting Programs	Parents with children under 18 living at home	Parents Served as a Percentage of Parents with Children Under the Age 18
Apache	3	5,577	14,649	38.07%
Cochise	4	39,370	22,336	176.26%
Coconino	4	8,681	21,716	39.98%
Gila	5	13,243	8,085	163.80%
Graham	3	3,050	5,775	52.81%
Greenlee	1	20	2,219	0.90%
LaPaz	1	15,176	2,655	571.60%
Maricopa	50	79,446	467,652	16.99%
Mohave	6	80,007	9,711	823.88%
Navajo	3	2,600	19,053	13.65%
Pima	20	49,377	139,207	35.47%
Pinal	11	4,042	24,859	16.26%
Santa Cruz	2	12,000	7,607	157.75%
Yavapai	9	13,011	40,124	32.43%
Yuma	4	7,531	25,500	29.53%
Totals	126	333,131	811,148	N/A

Table 4: Parents Commission Funded Programs by County 2000/2001

	Programs	Dollars
Apache	0	\$0
Cochise	3	\$200,914
Coconino	0	\$0
Gila	2	\$174,965
Graham	0	\$0
Greenlee	0	\$0
LaPaz	0	\$0
Maricopa	5	\$838,507
Mohave	0	\$0
Navajo	0	\$0
Pima	5	\$591,876
Pinal	3	\$240,770
Santa Cruz	0	\$0
Yavapai	2	\$173,087
Yuma	1	\$37,665
Totals	21	\$2,257,784